

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2240

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1466

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR KS US

SUBJ: KIM CHONG-P'IL DISCUSSES TROOP WITHDRAWAL, OTHER ISSUES
IN TOKYO

1. ROK PRESS FEBRUARY 20 REPORTS PRESS INTERVIEW HELD IN
TOKYO BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG-P'IL (KCP). ACCORDING
TO SEOUL PRESS, KIM EXPRESSED HOPE U.S. TROOPS WOULD REMAIN
AT LEAST FOUR OR FIVE YEARS BUT SAID DECISION WAS UP TO U.S.
AND IF LATTER DECIDES TO WITHDRAW, ROK WILL DO ITS BEST TO FILL
THE RESULTING GAP. KIM SAID "WE ARE NEITHER PESSIMISTIC NOR
OPTIMISTIC" BUT ADDED KOREA IS PREPARING TO COPE WITH SITUATION
AND EXPECTS TO BE ABLE TO DO SO IN EARLY 1980S.

2. KIM SAID HE EXPECTS NO CHANGE IN BASIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH
U.S. DESPITE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
AND THE TROOP ISSUE. HE SAID DISTINCTION SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN
ROK INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND PROBLEM OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN
COUNTRIES, ADDING "ROK WILL MAKE THIS PERFECTLY CLEAR."

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3. DISCUSSING REPORTS OF U.S. CIA PAYMENTS TO FOREIGN LEADERS,
KIM STATED CIA HAS "GOTTEN INTO A MESS ABROAD" ADDING THAT
"NO OTHER COUNTRIES BLAMED THE UNITED STATES; THAT'S BECAUSE
THE U.S. IS A STRONG POWER BUT WHY DO WE ONLY GET BLAMED;
THAT'S BECAUSE OUR COUNTRY IS IN A VULNERABLE POSITION."

4. KIM ALSO REPORTED AS SAYING ROKG WOULD NOT HURRY INTO UNI-

LATERAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONTINENTAL SHELF BECAUSE OF DELAYS IN RATIFYING AGREEMENT. HE REITERATED ROK CLAIM TO TOK-TO ISLAND. ON KOREAN REUNIFICATION, KIM SAID ROK IS NOT IN HASTE TO ATTAIN THIS GOAL BUT IS MORE CONCERNED TO PREVENT RECURRENCE OF WAR ON THE PENINSULA.

5. JAPAN TIMES RECEIVED IN SEOUL CARRIED ADDITIONAL COMMENTS INDICATING KIM DENIED ANY "CORRUPT" RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROK AND JAPANESE GOVERNMENTS, WHILE ADMITTING THERE MAY HAVE BEEN INDIVIDUAL "BLUNDERS." REPORT ALSO NOTES STATEMENT ON KIM TAE-JUNG CASE, WITH KCP INDICATING HE FELT ISSUE WAS SETTLED WHEN HE AS PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED REGRET OVER INCIDENT. JAPAN TIMES ALSO REPORTS THAT KIM SAID YUSHIN SYSTEM WILL LAST UNTIL ROK "GETS A GUARANTEE THAT THERE IS NO THREAT FROM NORTH KOREA" AND ROK IS STRONG ENOUGH TO COPE WITH THE NORTH.

6. COMMENTARY SO FAR LIMITED BUT ONE PAPER HAS NOTED THIS IS FIRST TIME LEADING ROK FIGURE HAS SPECIFIED PUBLICLY A TIME FOR U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL.

7. COMMENT: INTERVIEW APPEARS TO REPRESENT FURTHER ROKG EFFORT TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR MORE DISPASSIONATE CONSIDERATION OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL THAN HAS SO FAR BEEN ACHIEVED. THIS WILL TAKE SOME DOING. HOWEVER, ADDITIONAL EFFORT EVIDENT IN FEBRUARY 22 REPORT THAT PRIME MINISTER CH'OE TOLD A GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE ROK EXPECTS TO BE "OVERWHELMINGLY SUPERIOR" TO NORTH KOREA IN THE EARLY 1980S. (KIM'S INTERVIEW, AND HIS CURRENT TRAVELS IN GENERAL, ALSO MARK HIS RE-EMERGENCE AS ACTIVE POLITICAL FIGURE, ALTHOUGH SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS DEVELOPMENT REMAINS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BE SEEN.)
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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